

Hollinger
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APPEAL TO THE ELECTORS OF CONNECTICUT, On the Political Issues of the Present Campaign.

WHEN we look through the long, dreary vista of human history, the eye seeks in vain for the government that promised to its people the peace, the freedom, and the protection which our own Constitution has guaranteed to us and our posterity. In all the old governments, whether monarchies or republics, there were in them and in the condition of society out of which they were created, the elements of inevitable dissolution.

Our fathers, when they framed our Constitution, which they hoped would last forever, had before them the experiences of all other nations, the frame-work of all other governments, so far as history had preserved their records, and from them they called with careful hand whatever seemed worthy of preservation in our organic law, and rejected whatever seemed worthless or destructive in other Constitutions.

No men were better fitted for this most responsible duty. They were the representatives of independent States, whose foundations were laid amid the primeval forests of a virgin continent,—States which grew to their full stature under the chasening yet strengthening influences incident to a condition of unremitting toil, constant suffering and ever-present danger.

The representatives of such communities saw the necessity of a common bond of union in a written Constitution, and in its conception they anticipated the danger of concentrated power on the one hand, and the equal danger of discord and division on the other; and they wove into a harmonious system of checks and balances the government under whose protection we have enjoyed for nearly a century so much peace and prosperity,—a government as complete and perfect in all its parts as human patriotism and ingenuity could devise.

The Constitution gives us two houses of Congress instead of one. This was designed as a check upon the passions both of the representatives and their constituents, and to secure the utmost deliberation, and the most careful revision of public enactments. The Executive was made a coördinate branch of the government; and, as a further check upon rash legislation, he was given the veto power. To the same end it was required that no Representative should be less than twenty-five years of age, no Senator less than thirty, and no President less than thirty-five. And to prevent all undue concentration of power, the Representatives were to be elected every two years, the President every four years, and the Senators every six years. Added to all these guards was a Supreme Court, with Judges appointed for

life, to which the States or its citizens may appeal for the rectification of all possible abuses from the President, or Congress, or the States.

Still further to protect the people from a despotic exercise of the Executive power, and to save the country from resorting for relief from insupportable tyranny to bloody revolution, the right of impeachment was given to the two houses of Congress. But this right was guarded against abuse, by requiring that one house should present charges, and the other should try the accused, who could only be convicted by two-thirds of the Senate,—but not a Senate to which one-third of its members had been denied admission.

Through four long years of toil, and blood, and tears, we struggled to maintain this government against desperate legions, armed and disciplined for its destruction. In this hour of danger, the republican party rolled up its sectional banners, and called upon the citizens, irrespective of party, to rally to the defence of the common flag of the nation,—to become the great party of the Union. They came from the hills and the valleys, from the mansion and the cottage, from the plow, the pulpit and the shop, and from every pursuit and profession.

The spectacle was worthy of the cause, as grand and sublime as any of which history has made any record. The thought was nevertheless a sad one, that our foemen were our own fellow-citizens, whom we must defeat, or perish amid the ruins of our government. Yet we were cheered by this conviction, that with the success of our arms, and the destruction of slavery, our triumph would be complete. We could and we would ask no more. Least of all was it in our hearts to exult over the fallen,—to add to the anguish of general bereavement and universal desolation, the fetters, the tyranny, and the insults with which barbarian conquerors crushed the spirits of the captives chained to their chariot wheels.

Again and again, in every form of law and public proclamation, we assured these brave, but misguided men, that when they had laid down their arms, they should suffer no more than they had suffered, but should be restored to their ancient rights and privileges, they guaranteeing that they would abandon the political heresy of the right of secession, which had led them into war; the institution of slavery, which they had been taught to believe to be unsafe within the Union; and agreeing to sustain us in discharging all our national obligations, while they repudiated their own. They complied with every condition; and it was our duty to receive them back, not merely to our Union, but to our confidence and regards—to assist them in repairing the ruin which we had made—to allow them to weep over and honor their dead—to accept, without distrust, their pledges made under new and bloody instructions, to maintain and defend the Constitution; and in all respects to treat them as lost and as found, as dead and as alive again.

It was not only magnanimity and humanity that demanded this treatment of the fallen, but our own self-interest and the permanent welfare and stability of the government. And what has been our policy towards these fellow citizens? It has been that of William, the Conqueror, over his revolted subjects, softened in rigor only by the

influences of our modern civilization. We are told that that monarch "took such vengeance on the English, that all former fire and sword, smoke and ashes, death and ruin, were nothing compared with it. In melancholy songs and doleful stories, it was still sung and told by cottage fires, on winter evenings, a hundred years afterwards, how in those dreadful days of the Normans, there was not, from the River Humber to the River Tyne, one inhabited village left, nor one cultivated field—how there was nothing but a dismal ruin, where human creatures and beasts lay dead together."

Is the spirit of a portion of the North any less bitter and vindictive towards their brethren of the South, though it be not developed in the ferocities which marked the desolations of the Norman conquest? Is that spirit to be longer cherished, which neither feels nor exercises sympathy for the fallen, nor remembers that ours is not a kingly government, supported by bayonets and hereditary rights, but a government founded on the will, the affections, the equality and the manhood of the whole people? If that equality in the States, which forms the golden chain that binds them to each other and to the Constitution, is to be rudely trampled under foot; if the manhood of brave men, misled by false tuition in regard to their political rights as communities, and to the proposition whether their allegiance, in the event of a conflict, is due first to their State or to the national government, is to be crushed out of them; if their affections, which should be cultivated with the tenderness due to a humiliated and broken-hearted people, are to be rudely repulsed; are we not stamping upon their minds and hearts, the hatred of England towards their Norman oppressors; of Ireland towards the British government; and of Poland towards their despotic masters?

We find no where in the history of the human race the good effects of harsh measures upon the defeated in civil or foreign wars; but every where the effect of amnesty and magnanimity has been peace and contentment. The Roman conquests, in a darker age, are full of instruction to us who live in a more enlightened period. The vanquished Cilicians were covered with the protecting panoply of the conqueror against foreign invaders. Tarsus, its chief city, was by the government made a principal seat of science and the arts, and to it were attracted admiring strangers from every part of the world. St. Paul, whose birth place it was, was ever proud to declare that he was "a Roman citizen."

When, in Ireland, amnesty has been proclaimed, and any sign of justice has been exhibited towards that oppressed people, they have been peaceful and comparatively contented, so that in the milder reign of Cornwallis, the cruelties of Cromwell were almost forgotten.

But it is not alone for the South that we plead. It is for ourselves and our posterity. Injustice and bad faith in a government are sure to involve the whole country, sooner or later, in a fearful penalty. The crime of slavery, of which both the North and the South have been guilty, has drenched the whole land in blood, and the greater punishment has been inflicted upon the greater offenders. Let us confess our own wrong doings, and seek to heal the wounds which threaten the whole body, rather than longer aggravate them by measures

which never yet promoted the public good among a people worthy of a free Constitution.

We see with alarm, the rapid change in the form and spirit of our government, from a well balanced representative system, to a consolidated empire. Our veneration for the Constitution has been from the knowledge of the fact that its powers were so well defined and respected, that we have regarded it as the supreme defence of minorities, both of the States and of the citizens. It was formed when France was convulsed with the first throes of her bloody revolution.

Unfortunately, the champions of French freedom had but one legislative chamber, and no supreme court of revision, so that the passions of the people and of their representatives ruled the government, unchecked by the securities which our Constitution was designed to afford. And to add increasing velocity to the downward course of things, the Jacobin club, in midnight session, prepared the business of the chamber, and forced it to register its edicts.

Our fathers thought they had guarded against all similar dangers, by their division of the powers of the government into several branches, as we have described, making one a check upon the other. But the tendency of the Congressional caucus has been to sweep away all these constitutional barriers, and substitute for them the edicts of the caucus. As the Jacobin club was ruled by one man, the bloody Robespierre, so Congress and the American people are ruled through the national caucus, by one master spirit, without any of the responsibilities that attach to a king or a president. Such apprehensions will be treated by many good men as idle fears. So they always have been. It is too often the case that even good men continue to be blinded until their dangers have culminated in disasters, from which there is no escape but through long years of suffering.

One of the bad signs of the times, is the spirit of intolerance which exists among ourselves, not merely towards the South, but towards each other. If we cry for mercy and magnanimity towards the fallen, we are met with the taunt of "rebel," "copperhead," and "sympathizer with rebellion." We are ruthlessly cast out of the party with which we have affiliated, and whose ranks are crowded with good men, but, as we believe, misguided men, as were those who were prompted by their prejudices and passions to attempt to destroy the government of their fathers.

Regarding both these classes as disunionists, with the difference that one class intended to be such, while the other, in the mass, have no such intention, we have "charity for all, and malice toward none." We do not forget that the good Lafayette, who stood in the French Revolution where we stand in this, only asking for moderation and forbearance, was denounced as a traitor to liberty, and only his Austrian captivity in the dungeon of Olmutz, saved him from decapitation by the guillotine.

The Jacobins of France began their career with the loudest professions of love for popular rights, and even Robespierre declared his abhorrence of capital punishment, and his ardent desire for black suffrage in the French Colonies. Yet he soon reached that degree

of ferocity which enabled him to declare the day of the massacres of August 10th as a day most glorious in the annals of the world, "for," said he, "there are periods in revolution when to live is a crime."

Freedom for all races and all colors, was the motto of the revolutionists in the beginning of their career. With their success came first their cry of death to the king; next death to the nobles; next death to the aristocrats; then death to the priests; then death to the rich; then death to all opponents; and finally death to neutrals who could not be friends.

Human nature is substantially the same every where, only modified by circumstances. Our fathers knew it when they gave us our Constitution, which has been regarded as the perfection of political wisdom, the crowning glory of their successful struggle for national independence. It should be revered as the Christian reveres his bible; and every proposed amendment should receive the most mature discussion and the most thoughtful consideration. And, above all, every invasion of its letter or spirit, should meet with the most emphatic protest and the most determined opposition, whether it comes from designedly bad men or infatuated good men.

We regarded the late war as a defensive one entirely; not a war for conquest; not a war to perpetuate party power, at a needless cost of hundreds of millions to the treasury; not a war to keep under military rule from ten to twelve millions of people as justly entitled to their liberty under the Constitution as we ourselves; not a war from which was to be engendered a hatred to last for generations, and to culminate in bloody conflicts among our innocent posterity; not a war to excuse our disregard of the plainest provisions of the Constitution, under pretence of protecting ourselves from the civil or military power of a crushed, desponding and broken-hearted people.

The course of the present Congress of the United States is endangering *our own* liberties in the future, as well as crushing the liberties of the South in the present. The law of reaction is universal. Under the mad teachings of secession leaders, our government was in danger of falling to pieces, from the extreme doctrines of State sovereignty. The reaction has been, what the wisest of political philosophers feared, towards extreme centralism. When we have goaded the South into a desperate hatred of their oppressors, we shall have reason to fear either the disruption of the government, or another reaction back to a mere confederation or league of States, with a national government as contemptibly weak and inefficient as that which was hastily formed under the pressure of the Revolution.

We are told that the voice of the people is omnipotent, and that it was clearly expressed in the Fall elections. We yield to none in respect for the popular will, when its final and deliberate decision has been manifested. We do not regard that verdict as final, or as deliberate as we should do if it were repeated, or had been given by larger majorities, or after the passions, heated by bloody civil war, had had longer time to cool.

The people, we admit, have a right to change their form of government, and even to establish a monarchy, if they, in their deliberate judgment, shall deem it best. Our opinion is, that if the people,

untrammelled by party associations and party demands, could to-day express their voice upon the policy of the dominant party, it would be in repudiation of that policy, by an overwhelming majority. We know that many voters have cast their ballots in this contest, on both sides, with doubts and misgivings, feeling that they must choose between seeming evils.

We aimed to sustain the government and defend the Constitution against disunionists in time of war, regardless of party. We are now as earnest, in time of peace, to complete the Union for which so much precious blood was shed; and we shall continue our labors to this end, equally regardless of party.

The power of keeping out of Congress disloyal or other improper members, has existed, and still exists, and may be exercised without limitation of time by each house of that body. If the insurgent citizens have not been sufficiently punished for their offences, they may be indicted and tried by hundreds or by thousands, until the most voracious appetite for vengeance is appeased.

But we do protest against the longer dismemberment of our Union, on any pretence whatever. We protest against every attempt to obliterate or degrade a single State, or rob it of one prerogative which we claim as constitutionally our own. A State is not merely comprised of the people who are its present inhabitants—not merely of its present constitution and the laws upon its statute books—not merely of its territory, as bounded by geographical lines; but it is built up by the labors and toils of generations. It belongs to the memory of the dead who contributed to its character and progress. It belongs also to their posterity, who have yet to impress it with their own history. It is not a thing of the hour, but a vital part of the Union, and cannot be trampled down but at the expense of the entire nation. The generations of to-day may dishonor a chapter of its history, a period of its progress, but cannot rob the revolutionary fathers of the rights which they created in it, and which belong to all their posterity, to the latest period of its existence.

The democrat and republican stood side by side on the field of battle, in the struggle against rebellion, neither caring to ask from which party the other came. In the same cause now, we stand with those of any party who, in this civil conflict, are contending for the Union; and he who in such a cause is afraid of taunts and jeers, of the cry of "copperhead," "traitor" and "rebel sympathizer," which comes from those who have no better arguments in support of a disunion policy and a military despotism, is unworthy of the cause we seek to maintain. To all such timid politicians, who dare not follow their convictions, we say,

"Traitor! coward! turn and flee!"

The honest but mistaken radical, like the honest but mistaken secessionist, is entitled to respect for the manly avowal of his sentiments. The confession of his error, whenever made, should be regarded as sincere. There is hope for all such. But "those who know the right and yet the wrong pursue," because their fears prevail over their patriotism, are unworthy of their political inheritance.

The Democratic State Convention invited all who are in favor of the great principles which we have herein set forth, to meet with them in adopting a platform and nominating a ticket. We did not propose to interfere with their Convention, although thus invited; but left them to take such action as they should deem proper, uninfluenced by us. They published their creed, which is such as we can fully endorse, and nominated an unexceptionable ticket. We have to make our choice between that ticket and those principles, and the ticket and platform nominated by the Republican Convention.

We find upon the one ticket, the name of the Hon. James E. English for Governor. Though a democrat, from his earliest youth, he, when the country was threatened with destruction by armed rebellion, was ready and anxious to unite with all of any party who were willing to follow the flag of the Union until it became everywhere again the acknowledged emblem of our nationality. His private purse was ever open to the relief of our distressed soldiers, whose immediate wants were supplied by him, and who were thus furnished with the means of reaching their distant homes. So satisfactory was his course in Congress that it is believed that he would, at the close of his labors, have received, if he had not refused it, a unanimous re-election. Does any citizen of Connecticut, of any party, need to apologize for voting for him?

The Secretary of State, Mr. Pease, was never a member of the Democratic party. He voted for Lincoln and Johnson, and still maintains the doctrines of restoration which are to be found in the proclamations and other documents of these statesmen. But because he would not abandon them for the new principles of the dominant party, he was proscribed by them, and another was nominated in his place. Do we need to apologize for voting for him?

Judge Mosely, the candidate for Treasurer, was a republican until he saw that his associates were following heresies as ruinous as those which he had opposed during the war, when he left them. Do we need any apology for voting for him? The remainder of the ticket is composed of men of pure character and liberal views, and we would not separate them from their associates upon the same ticket.

Much as we esteem the many who sustain the organization with which we have been connected, and of whose integrity and patriotic impulses we have no doubt, we have no misgivings in regard to *our own duty* in the present crisis. We are truly and deeply alarmed for the fate of the country, now under the sway of an overbearing majority, (and a great majority is a misfortune to any country or to any party that possesses it,) and it should be our duty to labor unceasingly until more moderation is shown in the councils of the nation, and more toleration outside of them.

The men whose extreme doctrines and measures we oppose, rely chiefly for the success of their cause upon their industry and skill in inflaming the passions of the people with stories of outrages upon the defenceless freedmen and others in the South. If all we hear of such lawlessness and cruelty were true, it would hardly excite surprise among dispassionate men, who consider the natural effects of civil war upon any people that have been the greatest sufferers from



it. To these effects may be added the influence upon Southern society of the sudden overthrow of their slave system, which had been interwoven with every fibre of their social, civil and political existence. To these influences must be farther added the discouragements arising from the bad faith of the government toward them, and the seeming hopelessness of their situation. From a people thus circumstanced, what else than universal lawlessness or anarchy should be looked for? Yet order generally reigns throughout the South. There is less oppression, violence and outrage than might have been expected, even if the representations of partizans were truthful statements. But it is well known to candid inquirers that falsehoods of the grossest character have been constantly and systematically fabricated and circulated for the purpose of securing party majorities in the North, and affording apologies for the harsh and despotic measures adopted by Congress for the government of the South.

Let then all true Union men in our commonwealth unite to check the further progress of the spirit which threatens the eternal alienation of the divided sections of our unhappy country. Thoughtful minds are anxious over the present situation and future prospects of our public affairs. Capitalists are sensitive and apprehensive of financial revulsion. Labor is crushed down under the heel of the merciless speculator. The public debt is being increased by hundreds of millions, to pay, not *the wages* of Western soldiers, but their *bounties*, in which New England soldiers are not allowed to participate. The national treasure is squandered for purposes even less commendable. The South is wholly paralyzed. Desolation is in all her borders; and even her small capitalists dare not invest their money through fear of the confiscation now daily threatened in and out of Congress.

Let us, then, fellow citizens, who dare to throw off the trammels of party, rise to the magnitude of the impending crisis. Let us fully realize that in this State we have now in our keeping the ark of the Constitution which we have solemnly sworn to defend against all aggressors, whether they come from the North or the South. Let the banner of *our* party be the flag of our common country, with every star once more glittering in its original lustre before it was tarnished by the smoke and stained by the blood of civil war. Let the voice of our gallant State go forth, in emphatic tones, rebuking the intolerant and oppressive majority that now rules the nation with despotic sway. Let us bid the North and the South look up in hope for better days, when confidence shall be every where restored—when honest labor shall receive more than its daily bread—and when the whole nation, chastened by the sorrows of the past, shall unite in songs of patriotic thanksgiving over a united, prosperous and happy country.

In behalf of the National Union Committee,

JAS. F. BABCOCK,
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NEW HAVEN, March 15, 1867.

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